# MARTHA *of* INDIA

By MILLIE BOCK JACOBSON

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Her resolution was made. She would coax Uncle Will to let her go with him. *Page 21.*

# MARTHA OF INDIA

A MISSIONARY STORY

BY

MILLIE BOCK JACOBSON

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## Chapter One

### *In the America of Her Dreams*

"Now mind you, don't get lost," said Farmer Jones; and he said it for perhaps the fifth time, as he waited to see his charge onto an uptown car. "You tell the conductor where to let you off, —at the corner of Walnut Street, you know; tell him where you want to go, —to the Fountain Square Church, remember; that will be the safest. Then you walk to your right three blocks,— to your right, mind you, not your left; and you'll be there. You can't miss it nohow, if you mind what you are about. It's all nonsense your aunt feeling so

fussy about you; women are always afraid that women folks are going to get lost. And, when the meetin' is out, if you decide not to stay for evening,—and I don't much believe you'd better; your aunt will worry—you take these same yellow cars going the other way, you know, and come back to this corner. You can set down in one of them park seats and wait for me. Maybe I'll get here first, though; then I'll be on the lookout for you; and remember that the 4:40 is the last train out our way."

A clear voice answered this long drawn-out direction:

"I shall not get lost, Uncle Will; don't be troubled about me; I know just what to do. I shall be here on time if I decide to go home to-night; but don't expect me; I feel as though I really must stay for that evening meeting.

There may be old friends of mine there. I'll come back in the milk cart to-morrow, uncle, and give you an account of my adventures. Good-bye."

The farmer looked after her anxiously as she gave him a straight little smile and nod that was meant to be reassuring, and disappeared within the crowded car. He had it in his heart to ask the conductor to keep an eye on her; but, while he was considering how to say it, the car slipped on its way. He took off his hat and wiped the perspiration from his sunburnt face; the day was warm, and he had been standing in the broiling sun for nearly five minutes, looking anxiously for the right car. Farmer Jones was not able to get accustomed to the new style of cars, without horses.

"I hate them slippery things," he

had confided to his niece. "You think you're going to git one of 'em, and you start for it, and by the time you get across the street to where you think it will stop, it has gone on and is about half a mile away. I have to be out there on hand, and wait for 'em."

He shook his head at this one as it glided around a curve, and said in troubled tones: "I dunno as it is quite the thing, after all. Harriet doesn't think it is, and maybe she is right. The child is young and pretty to be dodging around city streets alone; but then, it is a woman's meetin', and she is as sot in her ways as any woman among 'em, if she is young; so what could I do?"

Martha Jacobs left the car at the proper corner, without giving the conductor any other information than the street she wanted, and walked rapidly to the Fountain Square Church.

Her cheeks were a lovely pink, and her breath came in quick little catches that denoted suppressed excitement. something besides the warmth of the day was affecting her. It was not that she was afraid, although she was alone in a great city for the first time in her life. Perhaps she was less afraid on that account. She was not timid by nature, and it was impossible for her to imagine what there was in this trip of hers to cause her uncle and aunt anxiety. But her whole frame was thrilling with irrepressible excitement over the thought that at last she was to realize the fulfilment of some of her eager dreams. In order to understand her mood, you will need to know a bit of her history.

Martha Jacobs, aged twenty, was bright-eyed, quick of step, eager for

the world, or for what she thought was the world, had been in her mother's homeland for the past five months; yet this was her first little venture into that rose-colored world. She was the daughter of a foreign missionary. Once, when a little girl, she had come to America with her parents; and its beautiful homes, and beautiful churches, and beautiful streets, and lovely people, had lingered with her in memory through the years as a vision of the heavenly city might linger with you.

Contrary to the custom of most missionaries, her parents had taken her back with them to India, and she spent her girlhood in that far-away land, her father and mother being her only teachers. Very efficient and skilful teachers they were; and Martha, being an apt pupil, and having no society save her

own books, at the age of nineteen had acquired such an education as any American girl might think of with satisfaction.

Then her health, which up to this time had been uniformly good, began to fail. Before the year waned, the anxious parents knew two things,—that they could not be spared to go home, and that their daughter must go.

Meantime, grandfathers and grandmothers had gone to the home from which there is no returning, and the only relative left in America to receive Martha was a half-sister of her mother, Mrs. Wm. Jones. To the old farmhouse, whose situation was five miles away from a little dreary village, came Martha, therefore, on her second visit to her mother's homeland. Martha's father was an orphan from his boyhood.

They had been very good to her, those simple country farmers. Her Aunt Harriet, it is true, had not known the girl's mother very well, being separated from her since she was fourteen, but she received Martha with as much warmth as her rugged, suppressed nature would allow, and recognized her as kindred. Their own children had grown up, and gone out into the world, and left them; they were boys, and the father and mother felt that they knew nothing about girls, and Martha was to them a sort of experiment. They watched the frail, dark-skinned girl with the deepest interest; fed her on milk fresh from the cow, and cream almost thick enough to cut, and new-laid eggs, which she became interested in hunting from the nests for herself, and they were heartily encouraged and re-

joiced to see her growing unmistakably strong and well under their judicious coddling.

Well in body she was certainly; but never, perhaps, in all America could there have been found a more thoroughly homesick girl than was Martha Jacobs. Aunt Harriet, while she did her best for her niece, was not in very special sympathy with either her training or her ideas. She did not think, for instance, that she believed very much in foreign missions. Why should people go to the ends of the earth in search of heathen, when they were as thick as grasshoppers in August around one's own door? She had always thought her sister did a foolish thing in marrying Dr. Jacobs and going away off to India, leaving her father to mourn for her. She could not help

occasionally expressing such views to Martha, and the girl shrank from them as if they were blows. It was a new experience of life to her. She had lived in the supposition that all America was athrob with missionary zeal.

William Jones was a man who in most matters agreed with his wife, especially if they were minor matters, like this one! There was also, apparently, the same spirit in the poor little church to which they drove on Sundays, if the roads were not too "heavy," or the day too cold or too warm. There was no missionary organization of any sort connected with that church; and during the weary Sundays that Martha had passed in its straight-backed, old fashioned, uncomfortable pews, she had not heard the missionaries even prayed for.

As strength returned to her body, the hunger grew in her heart. This was by no means the America of her dreams, or of her experiences. Had not Martha, the young girl, been taken to wonderful meetings, in great, splendid churches, where the platform was crowded with noble-looking men and women, and among them her father and mother, being treated almost like representatives of royalty? There were times when she seemed to hear again the roll of the great organ, and to feel the thrill that ran through her frame when the audience arose and sang the missionaries' farewell hymn, and many of them mingled their tears of sympathy as a whitehaired pastor, whose voice trembled with feeling, commended the departing missionaries, and their friends who were to be left behind, to the covenant-keeping God.

Oh, she was sure that there was a great heart for missions in this beautiful America. It was only the miserable little town where her aunt lived that had failed to catch any of its fire. If she could but escape from the place for a little while, and be with her brothers and sisters! How she longed to get among those who knew of the work that her father and mother were doing, whose faces would glow with sympathy as they heard from her lips some of the wonderful details!

"You ought to go out lecturing," Farmer Jones would say to her occasionally with a half-skeptical, half sympathetic laugh, when she had been aroused into giving him some incident connected with her Indian experience. "What is the reason you couldn't go around holding meetings, like other

Martha, meantime, sat bolt upright, with glowing cheeks, and bitter indignation in her heart. *Page 38.*

He lingered beside Martha long after they returned to the living room. *Page 53.*

missionary women, and preach to the folks. What was the name of that woman, mother, that Joel's wife wrote about, who lectured, and preached, and I don't know what not, every night in the week, in their place? She was a missionary from away out in China or somewhere."

Then would Martha cower and shiver, and declare that she could not do anything of that kind. Had she not from very childhood affirmed that that was one thing which she could never, never do? How was it possible for a woman to stand before an audience, as she remembered her mother doing more than once while they were in America, telling the people all about her work and the needs of the mission?

"Mother," she had said in that far-away time, "I can't ever be a mission-

ary as you and father want me to; because I can not stand up and preach to the people as you do. It would make me faint. I know it would."

It is true her mother had only laughed, and put her arm around her, and bid her remember what Grandfather Judson used to say, "Never cross a bridge until you come to it." But Martha had grown up with the conviction upon her that, however well fitted she might be for the other duties of missionaries, she would never talk to the people.

Then would Aunt Harriet say: "Mercy! father; don't go to putting any such notions in the child's mind. We don't want no women preachers belonging to our family. It wasn't easy work for her mother to do when she was at home; they just made her, and

I'm glad of it. There is enough for women folks to keep busy about in this world without their traipsing around the country doing what the men ought to do."

But the homesickness grew upon Martha, until it culminated in this visit to this city. A five miles' drive in the farm wagon; only forty miles by train; and the populous city, with its multitudes of earnest, wide awake Christians, who kept in touch with the work that the Church was doing, could be reached.

It is true that a visit there seemed like a tremendous undertaking to Aunt Harriet. Although Uncle Will went once a month to settle his accounts for farm produce, and to buy the supplies needed, Aunt Harriet had not been with him for five years, and declared

that the last time she was there, the noise and confusion nearly killed her.

"You don't know anything about it," she said to Martha, trying to dissuade her from what she knew was in her heart. "The folks rush up and down the streets like mad; and they don't appear to know half of the time where they are going to, nor how to get there. And there's street-cars in the middle of the wagon-roads, and carts and bells and whistles, and it is as much as your life is worth to get across a street. My! Catch me going to the city unless I had to! I draw a long breath every time I see your uncle drive into the yard after he has been there, and feel as though it was a special providence that had saved him once more."

But Martha carried a very determined will inside her slight body, and

persisted in her determination. She had read in Saturday's paper that on the following Tuesday the Fountain Square Church would hold its regular missionary meeting in the church parlors at three o'clock. Now, Tuesday of that next week would be her uncle's regular market day. For a week past all the plans connected with the farm had had to do with his getting an early start for town on Tuesday.

Her resolution was made. She would coax Uncle Will to let her go with him, and to show her how to find the Fountain Square Church. After that, her way would be easy. Once among those blessed missionary women, how many delightful friends she would meet! Had not her father and mother been almost oppressed by hospitality, while they were in this country? She

had her plans all made; she would select some sweet-faced woman who reminded her of her mother, and softly whisper that mother's name, and confess that she was her daughter, come all the way from India alone, to meet her mother's sisters in the work. How glad they would be to see her, and to hear directly from her lips all about the work that they were helping to do!

They would be sure to ask her to stay for the evening session that was always held during those missionary meetings, and at which returned missionaries nearly always spoke. Why, there might even be somebody there from India, some one whom she knew. That would be almost like a glimpse of home. Oh, she must surely go!

## Chapter Two

### *A Rude Awakening*

People learned, in time, that Martha Jacobs would be likely to accomplish what she undertook. Aunt Harriet, it is true, was troubled. She told "father" that she could not think what had come over him to countenance such a thing, and that for her part she did not know what Martha's mother away off in India would say when she heard of it. Uncle Bill, however, was a good ally. He rarely took a positive stand that was contrary to his wife's views, in the realm where he believed that she ought to hold sway; but Martha had won a large place in his heart during

her stay with them, and he was disposed to humor her to the extent of his ability. Moreover, he did not share his wife's horror of the city. Had not he been there every month going on eleven years, and nothing ever happened to him?

Once having given his word, Uncle Will was safe. Martha felt sure that her scheme was to succeed.

Her heart throbbed and her breath came quickly as she hurried down the street in the direction of the Fountain Square Church. She laughed softly over Uncle Will's anxiety lest she should not reach the train in time for the homeward trip. She had no idea of taking it that night. Those dear people to whom she was hastening would be sure to keep her for the evening meeting. Why, they would be

shocked at the idea of her not staying. It would seem like almost an insult to her father and mother if she should lose such an opportunity. And, oh, wouldn't it be blessed to get once more among people who understood?

The wide, fine street down which she walked was thronged with well-dressed men and women, all hurrying, like herself, intent upon reaching some place of interest. The young woman from India had not the slightest doubt that they were seeking the missionary meeting.

She quickened her steps, with the feeling that the church would be crowded and she would have difficulty in getting a seat. She remembered that at the last meeting at which her mother had spoken the people had to be asked to stand and to close the aisle

chairs, in order that her father and she might press through the crowd to get to her side. If the church were to be so full to-day that she could have no chance to reach those dear women on whom her heart was set, what would become of her plan for the evening? She resolved to push her way, and make a chance. She determined to get hold of a programme at once, and to look for familiar names,—some one from India. Several of the missionaries were at home; one of them, at least, would be likely to be present.

Then she reached what she knew must be the church, and crowds of people were passing it! For a moment she stood irresolute, with a feeling that she ought to tell some of them that this was the place of meeting. But perhaps in America they did not do such things.

She wondered that there were not placards out. Else how were strangers to be sure? She looked up at the great, solemn doors of the church, and wondered that they were closed, but reflected immediately that that was probably necessary to shut out the noises of the street. A strange feeling of timidity began to creep over her; she had not expected to enter the church quite alone.

At last, with fingers that trembled, she tried one of the doors; it was locked! She stepped back and looked at the clock on the tower. It was five minutes after the hour for meeting; unless, indeed, she had mistaken the hour. Suddenly, while staring about anxiously, she was confronted by a colored gentleman of careful dress and dignified manners, who regarded her

with grave suspicion, but asked whether he could do anything for her.

Missionary meeting? Oh yes, there was to be one this afternoon; but it was not to be held in the main audience room. Afternoon missionary meetings were always held in the lower chapel. She was to go around to the left, down the stone steps, then turn to the right, and at the end of that walk turn to the left again, and she would find the chapel door.

Oh yes, the door was unlocked; but nobody had arrived.

A very meek young woman wound around the bewildering path turning to the left and right and left again, wondering, as she went, how people who did not happen to meet the colored gentleman could possibly find their way. She came at last to a door

that stood ajar, and slipped past it into a great dark room.

Martha glided silently down an aisle, chose a corner nearest to an audacious streak of light that came through the stained glass, and waited. Five, ten, fifteen minutes. Then came the colored gentleman, and lighted a single jet of gas to make the gloom more visible.

"The ladies is late to-day," he remarked by way of sociability. "It is powerful hot, I expect they don' like to come out."

Hot! Why, the small audience was shivering. The transition to the sepulchral gloom within had chilled her.

Just then appeared two ladies, three, a half-dozen. In the course of the next fifteen minutes, Martha, peering into dark corners and carefully counting,

discovered fifteen. One of them tried the organ; it was locked.

"Never mind," she said, "Mrs. Pearse isn't here; there would be nobody to play."

Then she tried the piano; that also was locked. "Dear, dear!" she said, "the janitor ought to look after such things. I wonder where the hymn-books are kept? Oh, here are some under the cushions, three or four, well, we shall not need more, probably. Mrs. Johnson, you don't care for a book, do you? And I'm sure I don't."

From time to time some one glanced over to the corner where the stranger sat, but no one seemed to think of speaking to her.

"The table is horribly dusty!" said a lady, looking at her glove in disgust, and applying her handkerchief to the

offending table. "The janitor really does not pay proper attention to these week-day meetings. How very warm it is! I had a mind not to come, but I was not here last month. I wonder where Mrs. Rasmussen is."

"She is in the depths of dressmaking," volunteered a lady who was languidly fanning herself. "I called there yesterday, and she said we need not expect to see her at missionary meetings or elsewhere for the next six weeks. She is preparing to go abroad, you know. She was planning a lovely dress for Estelle, trimmed with the most elegant lace. How they lavish money on that child! Don't they?"

There was a general sigh of acquiescence, and one added, "She has everything that money can buy, but then, they are extravagant in all directions."

"Except in giving." This came in significant tones from the lady who fanned herself. The others laughed. "Oh, they can deny themselves in that direction as well as the best of us," volunteered a fat little woman, chuckling over her own wit.

Then they seemed suddenly to remember the stranger in the near distance, and to decide to have some religious convention. They discussed somewhat animatedly the question whether it was wise to try to continue the meetings through the heated term, and whether Mrs. Pearse would be able to attend, and why she was not there to-day. Then they lapsed into the secular again, and agreed as to the trials of housekeeping.

At last the fat lady said: "Really, ladies, I think we might as well begin

our meeting. I don't believe Mrs. Pearse is coming; in fact, I am almost sure she isn't. She is going out to dinner this evening, and you know she isn't very strong. Somebody must lead for us this afternoon. Who will?"

Apparently nobody would; several were appealed to, but made eager disclaimers after this fashion: "I? No, indeed. I haven't two connected ideas on any subject to-day, to say nothing of missions. I haven't even taken the wrapper from my missionary journal this month. Mrs. Wold must lead."

"Not I, thank you. I'm not interested in missions in India. I never read up about the work there."

Were any of them interested in India, or in missions, or in anything save their own affairs? Poor Martha, young, impulsive, bitterly disappoint-

ed, jumped to the conclusion that it was all a miserable farce.

One was at last found who would consent to sit in the leader's chair. A hymn was selected at random and sung by three or four cultured voices. In the mood that was fast possessing Martha, the very words sounded like mockery.

"When shall Thy name from shore to shore
Sound all the earth abroad,
And distant nations know and love
Their Saviour and their God?"

When, indeed, if the work must be left to such putterers?

There followed a prayer that was eminently prayer in tone and diction. It abounded in familiar phrases, such as "millions lying in darkness," and "the power of the cross to conquer su-

perstition"; but to poor Martha there was not a heart throb in it. Not a reference was made to definite work, not a missionary remembered by name. As to India, the topic for the month, apparently the leader was "not interested in India"; she ignored it.

Then followed reports. One was quite long, giving a detailed description of a May festival that was held for the benefit of missions. There had been a May queen whose right to reign had been bought by votes, the gentlemen being allowed to buy as many votes for their favorites as they pleased. There had been a fairy dance about the queen as she was crowned, followed by a formal presentation to her of representatives from all nations, in costume. Said costumes, according to the reports, had consumed somewhat more

than one-half the gross receipts. The entertainment was reported to have been a complete success; one important feature of it being that so many people who did not care anything about missions were interested. "Interested in what?" the stranger queried of her own thoughts; the report failed to tell.

Another hymn followed.

"Why should our passion mix with earth,
And thus debase our heavenly birth?
Why should we cleave to things below
And let our God, our Saviour, go?"

Immediately after the singing came a discussion as to whether a lawn party could be arranged before the young people left town for the summer. Mrs. Wold believed that it could. She offered the use of her grounds, and said

that the young ladies might be dressed as wood-nymphs, and they could have some of the mission band children for sprites, and that, with refreshments, ices, and creams, served by the aforesaid nymphs from grottoes built for the occasion, she was sure it might be made a success. The grounds could be lighted with Chinese lanterns; that would add to the effect, besides being most appropriate for a missionary entertainment. They must certainly exert themselves in some way to raise the special offering. "That self-denial offering that we pledged, you remember. It will be due early in the fall, before we have had time to recover from the fatigues of the summer."

At last the topic for the day occurred to the chairman, and she asked whether anybody had anything to say about In-

dia. She was quite ashamed of herself; but she had lost her magazine, and was therefore totally ignorant. A lady in the corner was induced to admit reluctantly that she had hers, and, being pressed, proceeded to read a long report, one calculated to give valuable statistical information to those desiring it, but utterly useless in a meeting of this kind. The reader's voice was soothing, and the day warm; more than one lady nodded frequent assent as the droning voice went on.

Martha, meantime, sat bolt upright, two red spots glowing on her cheeks, and bitter indignation in her heart. Was this the constituency on which her father and mother were to rest their ofttimes fainting souls? Was this the band of praying women whose published words her tired mother read and

reread, and wept over, and hoarded as if they were jewels to be worn in her heart?

However, by the time the meeting closed, consternation was beginning to take the place of disappointment and pain in the young stranger's mind. She had been so sure of remaining to an evening session that she had given little heed to her uncle's careful directions as to trains. She awoke suddenly to the memory that her latest train out was at twenty minutes of five, and that it was much more than a half hour's journey to the station, and it was already half-past four!

Those disappointing women had been so late in gathering; and then had gone over their summer's wardrobes and the shortcomings of their servants, before they commenced the meeting.

That "sweet-faced" woman to whom she had intended to introduce herself had failed her. The desire to remain with these women even for an hour longer than was necessary had departed. As for the evening session, which she had evolved out of her supposed knowledge of methods, apparently they had not so much as thought of such a thing. What was to be done? She had no money with her; at least, not enough to serve her at a hotel, and she was an utter stranger.

## Chapter Three

### *A Young Man Gets Interested*

Mrs. Wold must have been looking at the stranger just then, and noting the troubled face, she moved toward her. Mrs. Wold knew nothing about India, and very little about missions, but she had a kind heart.

"I do not remember your face," she said, extending her hand and smiling kindly; "but we are glad to see you here. The young ladies do not come very often. I wish they did. Do you live near the church?"

Thus helped, Martha essayed to explain. It was difficult work. Mrs. Wold was not familiar with the names

of missionaries. She had never heard of Dr. Jacobs. Still she was interested.

"Is it possible?" she said. "So you are a missionary's daughter; how strange!" The look that accompanied the words said: "Are you sure this is a true story? Are you not an imposter, a sort of female tramp, who has started out on a new line, to deceive the credulous?"

Martha felt the look. "My father is Dr. John Jacobs, of India," she repeated quickly. "I have a letter from him in my pocket; I brought it with me because—" she made a sudden pause; she would not tell those women that she had brought her dear father's beautiful letter, and a few lines from her precious mother, just to give them the joy of hearing the freshest news from India, if opportunity offered. She

must show it now for a different reason. "You can look at it if you please, madam, it will show you that I am speaking the truth."

"Why, of course, you are!" said Mrs. Wold, hastily; then she raised her voice: "Ladies, here is something interesting; Miss—Jacobson, did you say, my dear? O yes, Jacobs, Miss Jacobs, of India, is here. She came in from the country to attend our meeting, and has lost her train. She is a stranger in town; can you advise what shall be done?"

It is curious what homes were represented that day; some were full to overflowing; others were torn up and in the hands of plumbers, paper-hangers, and the like. One lady's invalid aunt, who lived with her, dreaded to meet strangers.

Martha interrupted the explanations. "If you could direct me to a respectable hotel, and be so kind, one of you, as to be be responsible for the bill until I can get back to my uncle and return the money, I would—" and then Mrs. Wold interrupted:

"No, no, my dear; we will not send a young girl like you to a hotel alone. That is not the way we do things in this country. I shall take you home with me. My young people have friends with them, quite a house full; but there is always room for one more. I can make you comfortable until morning. I would have offered before, only I thought some one else might be less crowded."

Was there ever a more reluctant guest? Yet what else could poor Martha do?

Seated, finally, at Mrs. Wold's elegant dinner-table, she did not feel more at ease. Although most of the guests were young people, she had never in her life felt so utterly left out and miserable. Her uncle's farm kitchen, with the hired man sitting opposite her, would have been paradise just then.

The table-talk was of the lightest and gayest, and had to do with matters of which she was ignorant.

Suddenly Mr. Ralph Wold, the son of the house, started a new topic.

"Well, mother, did you and those other devoted female women convert the heathen world over again, this warm afternoon?"

The mother's warning eyes having failed to arrest her son, she said: "Ralph, I am ashamed of you! Did not I tell you that Miss Jacobs is a missionary's daughter?"

"I beg a thousand pardons. I remember no such announcement; still, I mean not the slightest offense; it is only your missionary zeal, my dear mother, that moves me to merriment."

"Ralph is always poking fun at our missionary zeal," said his sister Eva, with a genial laugh. "I think he would better look at home. I'm sure I do more in a single month for the cause than he does in a year. Didn't I work myself almost to death over that May festival? And here is mother come home from this afternoon's meeting with a lawn fete on her conscience! It is for the benefit of the special fund. There are always special funds; or self-denial weeks; or something of that sort, for missionaries. I haven't yet recovered from that self-denial week. I denied myself that lovely trip to the

bay, just on account of the missionary tea. Why, we are always at work for missions in this house; aren't we, mother? Mother goes to the meetings, and promises, and I perform."

The mention of the lawn fete set all young tongues in motion. Mrs. Wold's idea had to be explained; and, as they talked, the idea grew. Somebody suggested a band of music to be stationed in one of the grottoes.

"Yes," said Miss Eva, "and we might have a dance on the tennis lawn. Or wouldn't that do on a missionary occasion? Isn't there some way to get money out of it? Each gentleman might be compelled to purchase a partner, and to double the price every time he desired to dance more than once with the same lady. That would be original, at least. I think we should

make money. Charles, you will vote for the scheme, will you not? Think what an opportunity it will afford!"

This evidently meant some local hit, for there was a general burst of laughter, in the midst of which "Charlie," shaking his head, said dolefully: "Do not expect anything of me; I am down on mission enterprises. I'm a sufferer from that self-denial week. I expected father to give me a complete new turnout for my birthday; and he shut down on it, with the announcement that it was just the week for practicing self-denial. I call that denial of other people instead of self, don't you?"

They could have no conception of the utter hatefulness of all this to Martha. "Self-denial week!" Yes, indeed, she knew all about that. Had she not humbly denied herself certain

small luxuries that were really almost needs, gladly dropping into her mission box the coins they represented, feeling that she was even in this small way a living part of her mother's and fathers' life of daily sacrifice?

Mr. Ralph Wold, whose nearest neighbor she was at table, decided perhaps, just then, that he had a duty to perform toward this grave-faced stranger. His first effort at conversation was in pursuance of a thought that had come to him a moment before.

"Miss Jacobs, have you relatives of your name in this country?"

"I am thankful to say I have not."

The manner of her reply surprised him; it seemed to have a great deal of unnecessary vigor. Not liking to be vanquished, however, he tried again.

"I hope you are enjoying your stay

in this country, and that you are having an opportunity to study its beauties. We are so large a country that this takes time. I do not know how long you have been here."

"It is five months to-day since I landed, and I wish I could start homeward to-morrow."

Her tone, though low, was so intense, and seemed to express so much more than homesickness that he was tempted to question further.

"Because I am afraid that, if I stay much longer, I shall learn to hate America; and it's my mother's home."

Ralph was astounded. The pent-up torrent of feeling of some sort that showed behind this brief expression bewildered him.

"Now, indeed, I feel as though I must again ask 'why?'" he said, smil-

ing, and wondering what reply she could make.

She did not keep him waiting. "It is because I feel insulted," she said in a low tone that was yet almost fierce. "All the talk I have heard to-day concerning missions is simply an insult to my father and mother. You are playing with the most tremendous interests that can occupy the human mind. You believe that millions of souls are perishing for lack of help that you could give, and you spend your money and your time and your strength on luxurious nothings and dole out the paltry sums which you make by your play to support the missionaries who are doing your work for you. You talk of sacrifice! I wonder who among you knows by experience the first syllable of its meaning. Do you think my fa-

ther and mother do not understand it? What have they sacrificed? No young lady of our set had a more lovely home or choicer opportunities for culture than she gave up to go to India. And my father put aside the most flattering opening for making what you call a successful life, and went to that dark land, apparently in order that those who are called by the same name as himself might stay at home and amuse themselves. 'May parties,' indeed! and 'lawn fetes' and creams and dances and sprites and nymphs to support that for which the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross!"

Did ever a society young man at a fashionable dinner table hear stranger talk than this? The clatter of tongues was so great all about them that the impassioned words had not been even

noticed by the others, but Ralph was almost overwhelmed by surprise, and a certain feeling that seemed much like self-reproach. He found himself questioning and cross-questioning, bending his head to catch every word of reply. He lingered beside Martha long after they returned to the living room, being so absorbed in what she had to tell him as to fail to notice the questioning glances of his other guests.

His sister Eva commented on his conduct when she and her mother were alone.

"Did you notice Ralph? He hardly spoke to any of the others, just held himself to the side of that large-eyed Miss Jacobs. What do you suppose you have done, mother, by bringing that solemn-looking girl home with you?"

As for Ralph, about that time he was

walking thoughtfully up and down his own room, considering the items that he had heard.

"She is a perfect cyclone!" he told himself. "I never in my life heard anyone talk like her. If the half that she has told me is true—and, of course, it is; she knows what she is talking about — what insufferable fools we must appear in her eyes! Still, our kind has deceived her. There is such a thing as real missionary zeal on this side the water. She ought to hear Dr. Faulkner preach on missions. For that matter, she should hear Mrs. Faulkner pray. But the question is, why are not all Christians aroused? I wonder whether she has the least idea how tremendously she hit me. I confess to having been always more or less amused over my mother's missionary efforts;

still, after all, she has done something while I have done nothing; except to dance at the May festival and look after a wood-nymph or two! I tell you that was cutting! I mean to look into this thing. I promised I would, and I certainly will."

The very next evening he went to a union missionary meeting that he found advertised in a neighboring church. He had never done such a thing before in his life. It struck him as strange that he had not. Why should he not go to missionary meetings? It was true, as that girl had said, that he called himself by the family name, "Christian." Why was it not his work as well as her father's?

The meeting was not remarkable in any way. It is sometimes very hard to get up remarkable missionary meetings.

There are not enough people interested to help to do it. But there was a collection taken at its close, and Ralph left the loose change in his pocket, and drew out his well-filled pocketbook.

The chairman of the missionary committee of the young people's society of Dr. Stearn's church was at that meeting, and she seized upon the chairman of the lookout committee the moment the meeting closed.

"Did you see Ralph Wold here?" she asked. "I never saw him at a missionary meeting before. I didn't know he was interested in any of these things. And he put a ten dollar bill into the basket. I sat just back of him and saw it. Look here, Margaret Yackman, you must go for him this very week. He belongs to us. He is a member of our church. Didn't you know it? Yes, of

course he is; and he ought to belong to our young people's society. Don't you let another Sunday pass without asking him; those ten-dollar bills ought to drop into our missionary baskets; and there are a hundred other ways in which he can help. I'm so delighted to know that he is one of that kind; somehow, I didn't expect it."

O mother, mother Wold! You know nothing about India, and not much about other mission ground; still, you wish to have yourself counted as being identified with the cause; but you have not the remotest idea what you did for missions by befriending the large-eyed stranger that sultry summer afternoon.

## Chapter Four

### *A Surprised and Spellbound Audience*

More had been accomplished by that meeting in the Fountain Square Church than any of the actors therein imagined. Martha Jacobs went back to the rugged farm transformed. All the while she was bumping along the uneven road, seated in the milk-wagon, she was going over her strange experience, and forming her plans founded on the new resolves that had sprung into being.

Her former terror at the thought of "talking" in a public meeting, as she knew missionaries were expected to do

when they came home for rest, seemed to have gone from her. She *wanted* to talk, she panted for the opportunity. Those women with their apathy for missions and their enthusiasm for play had aroused within her a new sense of power and desire. She could have told them things about women in India that would have made their blood seem to fairly freeze in their veins, oppressive summer day though it was. They were ignorant, densely ignorant; she had not imagined that such a condition of things could be possible in this Christian land. While her father and mother had gone on, up the height of self-sacrifice, the home-land had stood still, or retrograded. If ever any people needed rousing, Christians such as those she had met at the missionary meeting needed it.

There was another small matter that had helped to fire her zeal. During a break in the conversation with Ralph Wold that evening, while he was summoned elsewhere for a moment, she had listened to talk near her, her attention having been arrested by the sound of her own name.

"Do you know that Miss Jacobs has a career opening before her?"

"Miss Jacobs? Mary, do you mean? Why certainly, several of them."

"Oh, but this is something quite new. She has promised to attend the closing exercises of the Star Club, and give them an exhibition of fancy club swinging."

"The idea! I shouldn't think she would like to do that."

"Oh, she does it for benevolence. The club is raising funds for the read-

ing room, and it is thought that people will come to see Mary perform who wouldn't ordinarily think of attending; and that is true; it will be quite a lift for them. But I don't think Ralph likes the idea very well, and I confess that I shouldn't think he would."

The talk degenerated after that into actual gossip about the affairs of Mary Jacobs and Ralph; but the thought that had stayed with Martha was that this unknown namesake of hers was able to make an exhibition of physical strength and grace for the sake of some benevolence, while she, the daughter of missionaries, could not get the consent of her will to stand before an audience of Christian women and tell them of things that they ought to know! After that, she assured herself that she could, and would.

Over her decision Aunt Harriet was astonished and a trifle annoyed; but Uncle Will was decidedly upon Martha's side.

"The girl knows things that are worth telling," he said sturdily, "things that I didn't know about myself." And Uncle Will put a crisp five-dollar bill in the next annual collection for foreign missions.

By September Martha's plans were fully formed, and she was in communication with dozens of churches that were glad to pay her expenses and take up a special collection for the cause of missions, for the sake of having the daughter of a missionary speak to them.

Her experience during that never-to-be-forgotten campaign would fill volumes. She encountered all sorts of devices for raising money. She became

filled with admiration over the ingenuity of the human mind in devising ways and means for extracting money in the name of benevolence.

She came in contact with some earnest men and women, whole-hearted souls who put Christ always first, and labored incessantly for the coming of His kingdom. Gradually her knowledge of America and its virtues, as well as its faults increased as her horizon widened. She was not now in danger of "hating" the home-land; she had met too many noble workers here, whom to know was to love for all time, as well as all eternity. But she found many bearing the name of Christ and utterly indifferent to His last command.

Once she accepted an invitation to an important city church. The missionary meeting was to be held in the

evening, and the belief was that on this account the attendance would be larger than the average.

"I should not be surprised if there should be as many as a hundred women out, Aunt Harriet," said the youthful missionary as she packed her bag, "and perhaps a dozen men. A few of them always come to an evening meeting."

"Pity's sake!" said Aunt Harriet, grimly. "I should think they could raise more folks than that who would like to hear about a country they had never seen, from one who has lived there all her life."

Aunt Harriet, having gone over to the enemy's side, had gone wholly, and wanted to have her niece honored with large audiences. But Martha laughed; she was not in search of honor; if she could get to the hearts of a hundred

And why in the world did they not have somebody to offer the opening prayer, and to introduce her? *Page 69.*

"This is our champion" explained one of the young ladies.
*Page 75.*

women at once, she would "thank God and take courage." Large missionary gatherings outside of the popular annual meetings of the great boards of the Church she had learned not even to hope for.

On this particular evening other engagements had made it impossible for her to reach the city until almost the appointed hour for the meeting to open. To make this more trying, the train was late. She was therefore not surprised at being hurried most unceremoniously into an automobile by a committee of two ladies and a gentleman, who waited only to ask whether this was Miss Jacobs, and to tell her, what she had been nervously considering for the last half hour, that the audience was waiting for her. During the rapid drive from the station she

was occupied in explaining the causes of detention. The only information given her was that she would find an enthusiastic audience, the largest they had had this winter. Whereupon her hopes began to rise higher. It might be that she would have a chance to speak to as many as two hundred women, and that would be a triumph indeed!

Arrived at the building, she was hurried through a maze of side-doors and ante-rooms quite unlike any church arrangement familiar to her, but on reaching the platform her surprise was lost in admiration and also bewilderment at the size of the audience. An immense room with galleries rising tier on tier; and everywhere, floor, galleries, even the space in front of the platform, packed closely with humanity.

The mammoth missionary meeting of which she had read, and over which her soul had thrilled, was before her at last. But oh, the terror of it—she was to speak to them! This thought almost took away her breath. In her day-dreams there had always been present some favorite missionary who held his audience spellbound. What had she done in gathering such a mighty concourse of people to listen to her? Could she say anything worthy of the cause she represented? Could she do justice to her father and mother?

She turned back to speak to the reception committee.

"I did not understand that you were to meet in a hall. Is there—are there not other exercises?"

"O yes," one of the ladies explained; there was a programme prepared that

they had intended to carry out; but they had decided, when they found the train was so late, to wave all preliminaries and place her first, because there were suburban trains that left soon after nine o'clock, which some of the audience would have to take. She was instructed to take all the time she wished; the programme was of no consequence. It would not make a particle of difference whether any other feature of it was carried out or not. What the people wanted this evening was Miss Jacobs. She was informed that the pianist was in his place before the instrument, and could be directed as to what was desired; then the reception committee vanished behind the mysterious screens.

All this was a new and strange way to arrange a missionary meeting.

Where was the pastor of the church? Or, as this must be a union of several churches, where were all the pastors? How was she expected to manage the music? She did not know what book was to be used. If they had wanted her to make selections, why had they not instructed her to that effect? And why in the world did they not have somebody to offer the opening prayer, and to introduce her? She had never heard of such proceedings. She looked about her anxiously. Not a person was at hand to consult, save the pianist; and he looked like a young man who would not understand how to manage a missionary meeting.

Never mind; that great audience was waiting. Perhaps the committee wanted as informal and social a meeting as possible. There were some

hymns that everybody sang. How magnificent, for instance, "All hail the power of Jesus' name" would sound, issuing from so many throats! She resolved to ask the pianist to play the first line without any announcement.

She recalled afterward the look on that pianist's face as she bent toward him and asked, "Will you play 'Coronation,' and lead it? I mean without announcement. I would like to get the effect of its almost spontaneous outburst from the lips of this great audience."

There was a single moment of hesitation; evidently there was no "Coronation" music in the pile at the pianist's side. But he was equal to the situation. The keys of the grand piano were suddenly struck by a master hand, and his splendid voice at once took up

the strain. A wave of bewildered surprise seemed to sweep over the audience. They looked at one another. Then, in obedience to an emphatic nod from the pianist, certain voices joined his; and then the entire audience seemed to catch the inspiration, and old "Coronation," held sway once more. Not one verse only, but several, Martha's voice guiding the pianist. When they sang:

"O that with yonder sacred throng
We at His feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of all!"

the glorious hope of the future held the girl on the platform in such strong bonds that earthly fear shrank away; and she was willing to speak, even to that audience, of the throngs in India who ought at least to be permitted to hear of such possibilities for them.

"After that song," she said, her clear voice filling the silence, "nothing seems appropriate but the Lord's Prayer, voiced by us all. Will every one join?"

Again the house was filled with measured sound. "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come." On those three words, "Thy kingdom come," Martha had thought to hinge her message to the hundred women she hoped to meet. All the week her heart had been filled with longing for the coming of His kingdom on the earth; for the putting away of ignorance and apathy in this privileged land, and the rising of the people, His people, to meet the needs of their brethren and sisters in other lands. Then India, her home, the scene of her father's and mother's sacrifices and consecrations, might indeed

join in that "everlasting song." These people, she thought, sang and prayed as if they were in sympathy. She could tell them of India's needs as they had presented themselves to her, a young woman living in their midst.

Without further preliminary she began her story. For an hour and ten minutes the people sat silent, intent, listening to what was to many of them as a message from another world, so new and strange were the truths presented. The truth made eloquent by the heart-throbs of a soul tremendously in earnest must always reach other souls.

When at last the voice from the platform ceased, another voice in the audience said instantly, "Let us pray." And Martha heard what Ralph Wold had wished she could hear, for it was Dr. Faulkner who prayed.

After that, the congregation seemed to consider itself dismissed. It was all very strange. No one apparently thought of such a thing as a collection; there was no attempt at a closing hymn; there was not even the benediction; the people simply rushed away, as from an entertainment. That is, most of them did. There were groups that lingered in aisles or doorways, and talked together and laughed, some of them immoderately.

## Chapter Five

### *A Glorious Tangle All Around*

While Martha waited, still on the platform, that reception committee came to her once more, bringing with them a tall young man. "This is our champion," exclaimed one of the young ladies," "the gentleman whose mother is to entertain you."

"O," said Martha, who had wondered why he had not appeared before, "is this Mr. Vaughn? Champion missionary worker, I suppose?"

There were bursts of laughter from the young ladies, in which "the champion" seemed obliged at first to join, but he controlled himself promptly and hastened to explain.

"O no, I am not Mr. Vaughn; I'm only Charles Dennison, champion club swinger, so called, by our set. I think you must be very weary, Miss Jacobs. My mother is sorry not to be here to welcome you herself; the illness of my little sister detained her at home this evening. Nothing serious, you understand, only Pet thinks she needs her mother when she has any sort of discomfort, and mother could not feel willing to leave her."

He hurried Martha away from the people who now seemed inclined to gather about her, and yet held themselves back in an unusual way. In truth, the girl was by this time so bewildered that she hardly knew how to carry on her part of the conversation, and was glad to find herself seated in the car with the "champion" opposite

her. Yet this, too, was bewildering. Since he was not Mr. Vaughn, the son of her missionary hostess,—that was to have been— why was she here, and where was Mr. Vaughn?

"I beg your pardon," she said, as the car then rolled away, "but I think there must be some mistake. I had correspondence with a Mrs. W. T. Vaughn of Forty-fifth street, who said that her son would conduct me by street car to their home. He was also to have met me at the train, and, indeed, I supposed it was he who accompanied the ladies. Do you know whether he did? And are you sure your mother expects me?"

"O yes, indeed!" he said eagerly, "she expects you, or—that is, she expects Miss Jacobs. You are Miss Jacobs, are you not? Yes; well, that's

all right, you see; only—well, the fact is, there has been a mistake somewhere, and we have reaped the benefit. We are very sorry, not for ourselves, you understand, but for somebody, we don't quite know whom. If the Forty-fifth street Vaughns are in it, it must be the Central Avenue church people."

"Yes," said Martha, "that is the name; and that is another strange thing. I thought the meeting was to be held in a church. At least, nothing was said about a hall, and I supposed of course that a missionary meeting would be—"

"Exactly," interrupted the champion, "I presume it was; but you see ours—we didn't have a missionary meeting."

*"Didn't have a missionary meeting!"*

"Oh, I beg your pardon! I don't mean that, of course; we had a tip-top

missionary meeting. But I mean we didn't go in for that sort of thing, you know. I told you there was a little mistake. I don't feel sure that I understand it; I'm not in the least acquainted with the lady, never saw her, in fact, but—. Do you suppose, now, are you Miss Mary Jacobs, of Philadelphia?"

"O no! I am Martha Jacobs, daughter of Dr. Jacobs of India. I came from Philadelphia to-night by train; that is, I changed cars at Philadelphia; I came from a country town a few miles from there, and I was to speak to the Central Avenue people to-night on missions."

"Exactly; that was something like what I thought. But you see you spoke, instead, to the Physical Culture Club of the West Side."

*"The Physical Culture Club!"* It would not be possible to put more astonishment and dismay into four words than poor Martha managed to convey by this repetition.

"Yes," said Charles Dennison, speaking eagerly, as one anxious to convey all possible information and also to be conciliating. "You see, we planned to have a gathering to-night to raise money for the dinner that our club is to tender to the Albany Club; and Miss Jacobs,—Miss Mary Jacobs, I mean, who is a friend of some of our people, offered to help us. She was to swing clubs for us, and give a wand exercise, and things of that sort, you know."

"Then it was a paid entertainment?"

"O yes, we sold tickets at fifty cents. I think I can see just how the blunder

"No, madam, I am not. I am Mary Jacobs of Philadelphia."
*Page 92.*

"Certainly I realize some of the possibilities," he said, his eyes still merry. *Page 115.*

happened; the Burtons, who are Miss Mary Jacobs's friends here, and were to entertain her, were called out of town suddenly by the death of a relative; they telegraphed her that they must be away, and that a committee would meet her at the train; and the committe met you, instead, don't you see? At the last minute there wasn't any one around who had ever seen you, who had seen Miss Mary Jacobs, I mean,—and the train was awfully late, and that complicated matters. I suppose they only waited to hear that you were Miss Jacobs, and then rushed you away without giving you a chance to take breath, or to answer any questions."

The young man paused for breath, and they looked at each other, the "champion club-swinger" and his

would-be rival. His good-natured face was one broad expanse of sympathy and anxiety to make everything as comfortable as possible. Then they both, as by common consent, took in the utterly absurd features connected with the mistake, and burst into uncontrollable laughter.

It did them good, this outburst. Both had been wrought up to a most uncontrollable pitch of excitement, and the reaction was an immense relief.

After that they could talk, and plan together the best methods for explaining the blunder. The champion behaved royally.

"We sold five hundred dollars' worth of tickets," he said; "and I guess the people thought they got a thousand dollars' worth of good. It was better

than any clubs that were ever swung, Miss Jacobs; it was, indeed. You see, a lot of us never heard such talk before in our lives. We hadn't the least idea there was such a state of things anywhere as you described. I give you my word of honor that it was all new and strange to me. I'll tell you what, it is. Those schools and things need money, don't they? They need it a great deal worse than Physical Culture Clubs need dinners. I'm as sure as anything that our folks will vote to give you every cent of the money, to send out there to your mother's school. Eight hundred dollars for a single dinner, when there is such a state of things as you told us about to-night, it's awful, isn't it? That is the way the thing is going to work; I saw signs of it to-night. Fanny Ellsworth said to me as

I passed her: 'I'm ashamed of myself, and of our club, and of everything. Aren't you?' 'Of course I am,' I told her; and I am; and what is more, all the rest of them will be, when they hear that Fanny is; for what Fanny Ellsworth thinks is contagious, you understand. Dr. Faulkner held out his hand to me after you got through tonight, and, said he, 'Never mind the five hundred dollars, Charlie, give them to her for that little children's school that she described,' and our people will make it a thousand. Dr. Faulkner was the man who prayed. But what do you suppose the Central Avenue people did? I'm awfully sorry for them."

What they did was to send Mr. Vaughn, according to appointment, to meet the train. Now Mr. Vaughn was

a scholarly, near-sighted, timid man of forty-five or fifty, who looked about him in nervous uncertainty when the passengers from the belated train began to sweep through the gates. He asked at least a dozen women whether they were not Miss Jacobs before he found one who admitted that she was. Then he looked relieved, told her—what she already knew—that the train was very late; and hurried her into a crowded street car, where he stood as far away from her as the limits of the car would permit, until, after a long ride, he motioned her to follow him and dashed into a pleasantly lighted chapel connected with a large, plain-looking church.

Here were seated from seventy to a hundred women and a dozen or so gentlemen, Martha's audience, waiting pa-

tiently for a black-robed young woman with earnest grey eyes. Several of the ladies had both seen and heard her. The apparition that Mr. Vaughn introduced in triumph was not black-robed nor grey-eyed, and belonged manifestly to a totally different world. To tell the truth her costume, which was revealed as soon as she had thrown open her traveling wrap, was of a character to strike consternation to the heart of a missionary woman.

Aware of the fact that there would be no opportunity for making her toilet after the arrival of the train she felt compelled to take, Miss Mary Jacobs had dressed for the first part of her programme, and covered all defects with a neat, close-fitting traveling-wrap. Laying it aside, she stood before them in modern gymnasium

dress, full bloomers, long stockings, and dainty slippers.

As soon as Miss Jacobs had arranged her clothes to her satisfaction, she began to look around her, and seemed to be at once struck by some discrepancy between her surroundings and her expectations.

"What is all this?" she asked. "Is this a church? You look as if you were arranged for a prayer meeting. Where is the pianist? Why, where in the world is the piano? It is impossible to go through with my part of the programme without music?"

"There is a very good cabinet organ," said Mr. Vaughn meekly.

"An organ! Who ever heard of playing such music on an organ? We don't use psalm-tunes, you know. By the way, did you look after my box?

I never thought to speak to you about it, but it ought to have come right along with us. I brought my own clubs, you know."

"Clubs?" repeated the near-sighted and greatly embarrassed Mr. Vaughn, looking about him in hopeless bewilderment and signalling his mother to his aid.

"Yes, of course. Don't you remember that I wrote you I would bring my own clubs and bells? And I brought my Greek costume as well. For the second part of the programme I meant to give you some poses."

"Poses." In such connection, what could poses mean? Poor Mr. Vaughn! He could handle Greek roots in a way to bewilder every student at the university, but this would-be Greek maiden in her extremely un-Greek

dress was incomprehensible and appalling. It was with infinite relief that he hailed the approach of a meek-faced, sweet-eyed woman in a widow's cap.

His mother was a missionary's widow, and had looked forward to greeting this daughter of a missionary with almost a mother's tenderness. But she, too, felt overwhelmed.

"My dear," she said gently, "there must be some mistake. You are—Miss Jacobs?"

"Of course I am; but your arrangements are all very peculiar. What am I to do for a piano? It is simply impossible to get along without one. The postures are not pretty without music, and to use an organ would be ridiculous. I want to represent the emotions, you know, fear, and astonishment, and the like."

Mrs. Vaughn's face represented the latter emotion, both of them, indeed. Miss Jacobs turned her gaze in impatience.

"Where is your committee of arrangements?" she asked. "Where are all the members of the club, anyway? Surely this handful of elderly women and a few white-haired men do not constitute your club?"

Then the white-haired woman summoned all her courage, and rose to the occasion.

## Chapter Six

*From Indian Clubs to Home Missions*

"There is certainly some mistake," she said firmly; "we are expecting Miss Martha Jacobs to speak to us to-night. She is the daughter of a missionary, and has lived, until a few months ago, in India. It cannot be possible that you are"— She paused in confusion. It seemed impossible to complete her sentence until those bright young eyes looking at her curiously, with a mixture of surprise and indignation, through which gleams of fun were now struggling.

"That I am Miss Martha Jacobs, of India," she said, completing the sen-

tence. "No, madam, I am not. I am Mary Jacobs of Philadelphia, and have come to your city by special request to assist in an entertainment of a Physical Culture Club. So this is a missionary meeting? I confess that it struck me as a remarkable looking club. What is to be done? I wonder. I don't know where the club is to be found. I haven't even a street and number to guide me. I expected to be met, you understand, and cared for. My personal friends were unexpectedly called from the city, and I therefore expected to meet only strangers, and supposed of course that—"

"I am very, very sorry," said Mrs. Vaughn, earnestly; "my son should have been more careful. I don't quite know what ought to be done now. I am afraid there is no one here who is

acquainted with—clubs." She spoke the word hesitatingly, as if it represented something which, if not reprehensible, was so foreign to her life that she knew not how to meet it.

Something in her gentle, hesitating, anxious manner made Miss Jacobs laugh; at the same time, she felt sorry for her. "Never mind the club," she said cheerfully; "they will learn in due time that there has been a mistake made, and will hunt me up, probably. If they do not need me enough for that, they may do without me; but what will you do if the right Miss Jacobs does not appear?"

"Oh, we shall be able to manage. This is a home and foreign missionary meeting; and you were—I mean Miss Jacobs was—to speak of the foreign work, and Mr. Dunning, a missionary

from Idaho, is to talk to us about home missions. We can give him the entire time, unless, indeed—." She stopped in marked embarrassment, and with an appeal in her eyes that almost sent Miss Jacobs off into another laugh.

"Unless I will take part of the time? Thank you; I am afraid that would not be profitable. I never attended a missionary meeting in my life. But I will stay for this one, unless I am found; and I hope I shall not be. Let us hear from Mr. Dunning, by all means."

Whereupon she slipped swiftly into her decorous wrap, buttoned out of sight her athletic bloomers, and helped herself to a seat.

There was a whispered consultation with several women; then presently a young man went quickly toward the platform, and the belated exercises began.

To the enforced listener the first fifteen minutes were of unmixed amusement. To her there was something irresistibly comical in this complete change of programme. Instead of delighting an appreciative audience with her skillful manipulation of clubs and dumb-bells, she was actually seated in a church, and somebody was praying! Memories of the last conversation she had had with Ralph Wold came vividly before her. He had disapproved of her benevolent designs for the West Side Physical Culture Club.

"Physical exhibitions of all sorts are offensive," he had said in his most aristocratic tone; "quite disagreeable enough when the exhibitors are men; when they are ladies, what shall be said?"

She had resented the curl of his lip

and the veiled sarcasm of his words, and would have none of his advice. What was Ralph Wold to her? If she was skillful enough in any line to make people willing to pay money to see her work, she had a right to utilize the skill for others, if she chose. She had persisted in her intentions, but had been much disturbed over Ralph's disapproval. She knew that he had business in the city where the exhibition was to take place, but had hoped that he would be too fastidious to come and see her perform. She had felt that she might even fail, if she saw his keen, cold eyes fixed upon her in disapproval. Now she had visions of the airy way in which she would toss her head and say to him: "While you were attending a physical culture exhibition I was at a missionary meeting. There is no accounting for people's tastes."

Just when she ceased following her own memories and fancies, and began to give attention to Mr. Dunning, she could not have told. Something in the quality of his voice arrested her. The story he was telling was one of homely life, an account of a girl no older than herself, whose struggle for even a common-school education, and above all, for a knowledge of the Bible, in the face of privations and persecutions enough to crush a less heroic soul, was told in a manner to arrest the attention of the most thoughtless. Mary Jacobs was not thoughtful by nature; she was simply a young woman hemmed in by the environments of society life. As she had frankly said, she had never before attended a missionary meeting. She had supposed that missionary meetings were stupid. Some of them are.

Her attention once arrested, she listened; she could hardly have helped it. Mr. Dunning knew how to hold their attention. He lived and toiled among the people of whom he spoke; he had sacrificed much for them; he knew what they needed, what before very long they must have, if they were to be saved to this country and to God. As Mary Jacobs listened, her very soul caught fire. Was it possible that the earth—yes, more than that, her own home-land—held such girls as these, environed by such peril, alive to such possibilities, if only—!

Talk about an exhibit of emotions! Mary had come to that city to pose for an admiring audience. She had planned to show them how easily, without a word, one could express sorrow and surprise and indignation and pain.

Could she have had a view of her face during Mr. Dunning's address, she would have discovered that the human face alone, without aid from any other part of the body, could express all these, because the soul could feel them.

Never had she been so wrought upon by human speech. She forgot the strange and ludicrous combination of circumstances that had brought her to a missionary meeting. She forgot the incongruous dress she wore, and the elaborate Greek costume she had expected to don; she forgot everything but those stories of human struggle and disappointment and courage and victory. Why had she never heard such stories before? If this was what the missionaries were trying to accomplish in the face of such terrible obstacles, why were not she and every other

creature with a soul helping to the extent of their power? Why had not Ralph suggested to her some of these ways for employing her time and strength, instead of contenting himself with curling his handsome lip almost into a sneer over her good-natured offer to help the Physical Culture Club?

"Physical culture, indeed!" she said to herself, her own lip curling at the thought of the words. "It is moral culture that we need, every one of us, Mr. Wold included. I don't believe he knows these things."

## Chapter Seven

### *The Double Wedding*

It came to pass that the two young ladies named Jacobs, whose lives for one day became so strangely mixed, did not immediately get back to their individual environments.

Martha Jacobs had planned to remain in the city for several days, in attendance upon a missionary convocation. She was to have been the guest of Mrs. Vaughn. But the morning after her address before the Physical Culture Club found her so overwhelmed with confusion over the mistake, and she so shrank from meeting any of the ladies whom she had failed,

that what she did was to insist upon being taken to the ten o'clock train.

In fact, none of the people who had planned did as they had planned. For instance, Ralph Wold meant to have escorted Mary Jacobs to the morning train, and traveled with her homeward. He had also planned to be present at the physical culture entertainment the evening before. He felt that he knew just how the exercises of that club would impress him, and resolved that during that homeward journey he would speak some plain words to Mary. He would express in frankest terms his utter disapproval of her share in that entertainment, giving his reason therefor, not with sarcasm, as he admitted that he had spoken before, but kindly and earnestly. At any cost she should know his views.

"And, if she does not respect my views enough to give earnest heed to them, why then—" he drew himself up as he thought this, and set his lips firmly, but did not trouble himself to complete the sentence. His name had been coupled with that of Mary Jacobs for more than a year; he told himself that it did not disturb him that such was the case. Still, if she really did not even respect his judgment—and again he left the thought unfinished.

As he boarded the morning express, there was only one certainty in his mind, that he would speak his views very plainly as soon as the opportunity afforded. He was not very sure at that time but he would be sarcastic. It is true he had not attended a physical culture exhibition on the previous

evening, although he had bought his ticket and presented himself at the opera house for that purpose; instead, he had heard that which made him feel very plain-spoken indeed, almost savage, toward all physical culturists of every sort. This was, of course, unreasonable. Ralph could be unreasonable, and he was on this occasion.

Then he went forward and took a seat beside—Miss Jacobs, indeed; but instead of Miss Mary, it was Miss Martha; and he talked with her, not sarcastically, but certainly with great frankness, during that entire homeward journey.

He came, in the course of the day, to some marked decisions. One was, that, instead of shopping in Philadelphia, he would make a business trip westward. Another was, that, instead of

keeping to the main road, he would swing off at the junction and hunt up a college friend who lived somewhere in that region. Another was, that, when the train reached Branchport, he would stop there and make inquiries for his friend, who he knew must be at least thirty miles farther on! Also, he promptly accepted Martha's invitation to call at her uncle's house in the country that evening if he should have time; and he knew he should have time. So much for Ralph Wold and his plans.

* * *

As for Mary Jacobs, instead of taking that morning express as she had planned, she put herself into the very becoming traveling-costume her valise contained, and attended the three days' missionary meeting, remaining as the guest of Mrs. Vaughn.

Mr. Dunning was also the guest of the Vaughns. He escorted Miss Jacobs dutifully to and from the meetings, visited with her between sessions, visited with her on the piazza in the early twilight, and in all ways that he could relieved his hostess of care for her unexpected guest. Among other duties, he expressed the box of dumbbells and Indian clubs to Mary's home, and sent a telegram to her mother to the effect that she had decided to accompany her friend, Mrs. Vaughn, to Grenville to attend the convention. It was another missionary gathering, but Mr. Dunning was instructed to say "convention" in his telegram; and the mother thought it was a physical-culture convention.

* * *

The months went by; and it came to pass, in the course of time, that on a beautiful September evening the opera house of the West Side was even more closely packed than when Martha Jacobs first made its acquaintance.

But the platform presented a different appearance. Rows of chairs had been placed on it as closely as space would allow, and they were being occupied by clergymen and other dignitaries of the church, as well as by many missionaries who were not clergymen.

A mammoth missionary meeting this was to be, like unto the one of which Martha used to dream; larger, indeed, and more enthusiastic than any that her dreams had evolved out of early experiences. The waiting audience occupied itself with whispering. Intimate friends of the parties most

concerned were giving other friends interesting particulars connected with certain events that had lately transpired.

"Why, yes," whispered one lady, "Ralph Wold studied medicine and graduated with the highest honors; then he went abroad and studied. I knew all about it at the time. I remember we thought it queer, and we said he would never practice, the Wold family is so wealthy, you know; and, behold, he has become a medical missionary! I should have selected the president of the United States as more probable."

Then Whisperer Number Two began: "Do you remember that evening at Mrs. Wold's, when he first met the lady he is to marry? It was evident then that he regarded her with more

interest than he had ever shown for any other lady, but who imagined that she would cast such a spell over him as she has?"

"Sure enough! But Mrs. Wold and her daughter are as pleased as possible. They just idolize Martha, and they are going out to India in a few months to visit them. Isn't that interesting? The fact is, the entire Wold family have become missionary fanatics; they can talk of nothing else. I can remember when Mrs. Wold did not know one mission station from another; and as for her daughter, you could not interest her in anything connected with missions, and now they are by far the best-posted people in our church."

A third voice chimed in: "Nothing about the Wold family astonishes me so much as that other Jacobs girl has.

Only imagine Mary Jacobs as the wife of a home missionary way out in Idaho. There is something romantic about going to India, but a home missionary! I am prepared for anything to happen now."

"It has happened!" laughed a voice just back of them, and the lady leaned forward to add her word. "What do you suppose the West Side Physical Culture Club voted at its last meeting? To pledge a thousand dollars a year to the support of whatever work Mrs. Dunning and Mrs. Wold were engaged in! Isn't that a new departure for a Physical Culture Club?"

"Hush!" sounded a warning whisper, and this particular group of whisperers sat erect, and gave attention to the platform. The chairs were nearly all filled, and the presiding officer was on his feet.

Again the audience sang, "All hail the power of Jesus' name!" but this time the pianist was prepared. Moreover, the piano, though doing its best, was lost in the splendid orchestra that was present in full power. Those grand men who knew how to give missionary addresses were also present; and never had the theme of missions, both home and foreign, so inspired their tongues as on that evening.

Notably was this the case with Dr. Jacobs. The audience sat spellbound by the magic of his voice and the power of the tremendous truths he had to tell, until, as he sat down, more than one brushed away tears as they told themselves it was not strange that the daughter of such a man should want to give herself to the work.

Following Dr. Jacobs' address the

entire audience joined in a missionary hymn, and, during its singing, trained helpers made quick work with some of those platform chairs. As if by magic a space was cleared, which was presently occupied by two white-robed maidens and two young men.

"A marriage ceremony to be performed in an opera house!"

Yes, two marriage ceremonies.

"And to take place in the very midst of a missionary meeting?"

Yes, to become a vital part of that missionary meeting. The brides were Mary Jacobs, of Philadelphia, and Martha Jacobs, of India. And the grooms were the Rev. Oliver Dunning, missionary in Idaho, and Dr. Ralph Wold, medical missionary to India, or at least under appointment for that post.

It was Dr. Jacobs who performed both ceremonies, and the vote was general afterward that there never were two more beautiful brides, nor a more impressive marriage service.

At the close of the missionary meeting there was a reception given to the missionaries at the home of Mrs. Wold. At this reception the members of the West Side Physical Culture Club were exceedingly prominent. The "champion club-swinger," especially, showed his broad, good-natured face, first in one group and then in another; and his resonant voice could be heard affirming: "I give you my word that our club to a man and woman voted for the whole thing; we are pretty well up on missions these days, I can tell you. That first missionary meeting we had here in the opera house did the business for us."

Mary Jacobs Dunning overheard the sentence, and said softly to her husband, "It was my first missionary meeting that did the business for me, also."

Ralph Wold turned toward her at the moment, and she said: "I am wondering what would have happened had you not expressed yourself so openly against my helping in the physical-culture entertainment. But for that, I suppose I should not have promised them. Are you not glad that I did?"

"Very glad, indeed," he said, smiling into her merry eyes, "both for your sake and for mine. What has become of your clubs and bells and general apparatus? Have you donated them to the West Side Club?"

"Indeed not! They have started for Idaho. Mr. Dunning expects my class in physical culture to open the way for me among the girls out there as noth-

ing else could do. Moreover, I have been advising Mrs. Wold to undertake something of the same sort among her girls in India. You do not know the possibilities of physical-culture clubs, Mr. Wold."

"Certainly I realize some of the possibilities," he said, his eyes still merry, "and I assure you that I am a convert." Then suddenly he grew grave, and his voice was rich with feeling as he bent toward her, speaking low, and quoted: "I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.' Mrs. Dunning, you and my wife and Dunning and I have surely lived that promise out thus far; we may safely write it in our Bibles as 'tried and proved,' and trust it to the end."

# THE I. W. G.

By Millie Bock

Ruth Morgan had settled herself comfortably by the sitting-room window with a late magazine, when the gate clicked. Three girl friends were coming up the walk. She ran out to open the door.

"Oh, girls!" she cried, "I am so glad to see you. I am all alone. Mother went to the ladies' aid." She ushered the trio into the sitting-room. "Take off your wraps. You must spend the afternoon."

"That is what we want to do," laughed one of the girls.

"I've been wanting to come over ever since I heard you had returned!"

"You certainly stayed a long time."

"We had only a peep at you the other evening, and we want to hear lots more about your visit." Kate Osborne had

seated herself and was taking off her gloves in leisurely fashion. She was a pretty, dark girl with a peculiarly bright smile. The others were not so attractive in appearance: Henrietta Colbourne, with sallow skin and prominent nose; Bertha Holt, sandy-haired and much freckled.

When they all were seated Kate said: "Now begin, Ruth. Tell us all about it."

Ruth had resumed her seat by the window. "If I do that you won't get home tonight. I certainly did have a wonderful time. It was my first visit in such a big city, you know. And six months of it! I don't know where to begin. You'd better ask me questions about things."

"Did you go to many concerts?" asked Henrietta, who was very fond of music.

"Oh, yes. They have a most wonderful Symphony orchestra. And we had season tickets. I often thought of you, Henrietta, and wished you could be there. Such wonderful music."

"Oh, don't get started on music with Henrietta, Ruth, or there won't be time left for anything else. Just tell us about things as they pop into your head," exclaimed Berth impatiently.

"Begin with the parties you went to, they will interest us all," laughed Kate.

"You'll have to come alone some day, Henrietta," said Ruth with an apologetic smile at her friend, "and I'll tell you every blessed thing I can remember about those concerts. I have some programs and you can have them."

After an hour's gay chatter, there was a lull and Ruth said somewhat gravely, "You haven't asked me about one thing that I thought you would be so interested in."

"What is it?"

"Why, the Sunday School?"

There was a silence. Then Henrietta said somewhat awkwardly: "Well, we haven't been going very regularly lately —at least I haven't."

"Nor I," added Kate carelessly.

"Why, I don't understand," exclaimed Ruth in surprise. "We had such a fine class and we had such good things at our class meetings. And you, Kate: why, you were president of the class."

Kate shrugged her shoulders. "Well, I am yet as far as that goes. But when

there are no meetings why should the president bother about it?"

"But why weren't there meetings?" asked Ruth, more and more perplexed. "What happened?"

"I suppose the beginning of all was that Dorothy Alaxson moved away out in the country. You know we used to meet at her house because it was so central, and her mother was willing to have us. After she left we had no place but Bertha's house, and it is so far out, and so is mine and Kate's," explained Henrietta slowly.

"And so you have all lost interest, have you?" Ruth gave them all a keen glance as she asked this.

"I am afraid we have," acknowledged Kate.

"I am so sorry. I must tell you about the class I attended while I was away."

"Good girl!" laughed Kate, "to go to Sunday School while you were away on a visit to have a good time."

"It was the Sunday School class that gave me some of my best times. My two cousins are both teachers—they are both a good deal older than I. I was in my Cousin Alice's class."

Ruth began and described the various activities. She did it in an interesting way, and her friends listened attentively.

When she had finished, Kate said, "You seem to have had a good president."

"We did, but every member of the class works."

After a little more talk on Sunday School work, the girls declared they must go home.

From the window Ruth watched them walking down the street. "Why," she thought, "I don't see why they stopped going to Sunday School because they were not having class meetings. What about Miss Brown, I wonder? They did not say a word about her. She's such a faithful teacher. It must disappoint her very much to have the class go to pieces. I can't understand it at all."

On graduating from the high school the preceding June, Ruth had gone to the city on an extended visit with relatives. She had always been a regular attendant at Sunday School and takes a fairly active interest in the work of her class. The class she had attended while on her visit was such an unusually active and success-

ful one, its members so full of initiative and zeal, that Ruth had been filled with desire to introduce some of its methods at home. It was a great disappointment to find that the girls had showed no interest in it.

While out on an errand the next day, Ruth saw Miss Brown on the other side of the street and ran across to greet her.

"Why, Ruth, I did not know that you had come back. I am so glad to see you."

"I got home last Saturday night. But the train was hours late, and I was so tired after the long journey that I couldn't get up in time for Sunday School. But I'll be there after this."

Miss Brown's face clouded. "You will find a great change in the class. There were only two there last Sunday. Betty Gram and Helen Hunt."

"Yes, some of the girls came to see me yesterday. They said something about it. What's the matter?"

"They seem to have become interested in other things. I am very sorry. Wish I had the time during the week so that I could try to find a remedy for it." Miss Brown sighed deeply. But I must hurry

on. I am out on an errand for the firm. I am so glad you are back. I'll look forward to seeing you on Sunday.

"Let me see," thought Ruth as she walked on. "It's up to me to do something. I'll make myself a committee of one to act. But how? I'll stop in and see Betty Gram. It's quite near here."

Betty was coming out of the gate. She was surprised and glad to see Ruth. "Were you coming in? I can put off my errand if you will."

"I'll walk along with you. Now, Betty, do tell me, if you can, what is the matter that our Sunday School class is almost broken up. I hear that you and Helen are about the only regular attendants."

"It began when Dorothy Alaxson moved to the country. We had no place to meet. You know my aunt is not interested in the work and won't let me have the meetings here. The same thing with Helen. And the other girls all had some reason for not having the meetings. It's too bad. The girls ought to have kept up going on Sundays anyway, for Miss Brown is such a good teacher. Being employed at that real estate office as she is, she has only

her evenings to attend to her housekeeping in that one little room, and to make her clothes, and so forth. Yet she always has the lesson splendidly prepared."

"Well, we must do something," said Ruth with determination.

"If you could get Kate Osborne interested again, it would be fine. All the girls are so influenced by her. But she has society on her mind lately. And there's Henrietta Colbourne, she's music crazy since she's taking lessons." Betty paused and looked down at a little silver pin she wore on the lapel of her coat. It had the letters I. W. G. on it in blue enamel. "It seems the enthusiasm we had over these pins did not last long," she said.

"Oh, Betty! I'm really ashamed of myself!" cried Ruth conscience-stricken. "My pin is in my little jewelry box. I didn't wear it while away, but I went to Sunday School regularly. And it was a live one, I can assure you. I came home with a lot of new ideas to tell the class about."

"Well, if you can think up any way of getting our class all going regularly again, I'll be glad. I'll do anything I can to help.

The first thing to do is to get them back Sunday mornings, and then the next thing is to find a place for class meetings. Now I must go down the street. Good-by. I'll see you soon," and Betty hurried off.

"What a fine girl Betty is! She has to work so hard in helping that invalid aunt, and still she is one of the two to keep regularly at Sunday School. And I don't believe the girls had on their pins yesterday. But I can't say anything if they didn't. I had forgotten all about mine."

Ruth's thoughts, as she walked home after finishing her errand, were full of the problem of getting the girls back to class every Sunday. She talked it over with her mother at luncheon.

"Why not invite all the girls for a social evening?" suggested Mrs. Morgan. "We can make some ice cream and cake. Then you can talk it over with them and try to revive their interest in the class."

"Yes, that would be a good thing to do. But you know, mother, now that the weather is so cold and the furnace isn't fixed, we can't heat the parlor. Father and Uncle Rob wouldn't want to be in the sitting-room with a lot of girls."

"No, they wouldn't," agreed her mother. "I don't intend to interfere with their comfort. The evening is the only time they have to enjoy home. You can make a fire in the grate. Make it early and the room will be warm enough."

Ruth made a grimace. "Oh, mother, that would be so much work. I hate that kind of work."

"Yes," returned Mrs. Morgan quietly, "it will be some work. You must decide whether you want to do it."

"Oh, of course, I want to have the girls. I think I could get them to promise to go to Sunday School regularly. I would see Kate Osborne privately and persuade her to do it. The rest would follow her lead. She is so pretty and bright that she has great influence with them. But to make a fire in the grate, keep it up for hours before they come, and then clean up after it next day! My, I wish we had a maid!"

"Well, you will have to make up your mind about it pretty soon if you have them here before Sunday. Now, I am going to leave you the dishes to clear away," said Mrs. Morgan. "I have to hurry down town to do an errand for your father."

Housework of any kind was not to Ruth's taste.

"Of course I'm willing to help mother," thought Ruth as she hurried through with the dishes, "but to do extra dirty work! I hate it!"

She went up stairs to change her dress. On opening the little box containing her trinkets she saw her class pin, with its I. W. G. in blue enamel. She pinned it on her blouse. She remembered how enthusiastic they had all been when they first had them—"I Will Give." And they had given at first of their time and efforts. What were they giving now?

Ruth ran downstairs to the telephone. She would call up the girls and invite them for Friday evening.

She was fortunate enough to find the girls all at home. And they all said they would be delighted to come. And Kate Osborne had added, "I suppose, Ruth, you will talk Sunday School to us. Well, I've been thinking I ought to go back. But we can't have our meetings without a place to meet."

"Of course we can't," thought Ruth. "But where shall we meet? I hope some

day there will be a place at the church for meetings. Dear me! I wish Dorothy hadn't moved away to the country. It was so convenient for me. Just around the corner."

Here a thought came to Ruth which caused her to sit suddenly down in the nearest chair. Of course her house was convenient for them all! When it was just around the corner from where Dorothy lived!

It would be nice for her not to have to go out to meetings. But then to have to light that grate fire in order to have the room warm enough! To do it every week, and whenever it was necessary to have extra meetings. Oh, she couldn't. She wished her father would have a new heating apparatus. No, she couldn't do it! It was too much work!

It was long before Ruth fell asleep that night.

When the girls arrived at Ruth's on Friday evening, they found a room bright with the crackling fire in the grate. They all seemed to come at once. When wraps had been taken off, and they were settled comfortably in the big chairs placed about

the hearth, Ruth glanced around the circle. She saw that nearly all wore their class pins. She smiled and stood up.

"Girls," she said, "this is not a formal meeting, so without preliminaries I want to tell you that I invite you to hold all class meetings here. My mother is willing. There will now be no excuse for not attending them. This house is as centrally located as Dorothy's was. And let us remember the I. W. G. on our pins. Giving often depends on giving up something. Let us all give up the things which would interfere with regular attendance at Sunday School. What has our president to say?"

All eyes turned to Kate, she said gravely, "I will give."

And each of the others said firmly in turn, "I will give."